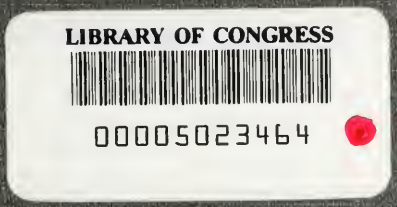
E 435
.B24



E431
E435
.B94

SPEECH

OF

HON. D. BARCLAY, OF PENNSYLVANIA,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AUGUST 6, 1856.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. BARCLAY said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Our country has scarcely passed the threshold of her destiny. She has but fairly entered upon that great mission—the dissemination throughout Christendom of the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty—the disinthrallment of nations. This she is not to accomplish by the conquests of her armies and navies; but by the more peaceful one of the liberality of her laws and institutions—by the noble example of a people with, in some respects, antagonistic local interests—inhabiting a country vast in extent, of almost every variety of climate and productions—establishing, administering, and sustaining their own institutions through a very simple piece of machinery—*the ballot-box*. The only hope of ultimate success is the Union—not a Union indivisible, for that would be centralization—but a Union just, fraternal, perpetual. It is by such a Union only our true greatness will be achieved. Hence integrity to the immeasurable interests committed to us calls upon each State and section of this country to abide by, and in good faith observe, *all* the compromises and requirements of the Constitution and laws of the United States. Without such observance we are cast out upon the wild ocean of discord, and left to drift at the mercy of the winds and waves of faction and fanaticism.

At more than one period in the history of our country have the calmest minds had misgivings of the success of "our experiment." More than once have the patriotic had cause to tremble for its safety. But, heretofore, as successive dangers arose, successively have they been met and disarmed of their power by the wisdom of the Government, and by the virtue, intelligence, and patriotism of the people. Sir, shall this continue? Many think it will. I earnestly hope it may. But it may be well to remember that assault after assault, and shock after shock, the famous Malakoff withstood—yet it fell. I have seen the stately pine, towering up to the heavens in the pride of its beauty, defy the fiercest mountain storms; and I have seen that same tree, stripped of its luxuriant foliage, standing a dead and withered trunk. What the storm failed to do the insidious worm accomplished.

This magnificent Capitol is able to withstand the most tumultuous warring of the elements; but once undermine its foundations, and its very strength would accelerate its fall. Repeated attacks upon the constitutional rights of the States—insidious attempts to demoralize the public mind—and the constant efforts to create animosities between the States, and alienate the people of one section of the Union from those of the other—are equally dangerous and destructive.

What, sir, are the signs of the times? Is it impossible that those dark scenes of desolation, which were witnessed in France under the House of Valois, in England under Charles I., and in Italy for successive centuries, may be reënacted here? Is danger diminished by closing our eyes to its approach? Is it lessened by denying its existence? Are the combustible materials which are being scattered about for no purpose? Will the unceasing exertions made to inflame the public mind be of no avail? Can we—ought we to be indifferent to the future of our country, when we see that cloud, which rose in the east, yet spreading over the heavens, and which, when no larger than a "man's hand," shook the very pillars of our Republic? Are we to delude ourselves with the siren-song of "no danger," when we see another and a younger brother making its appearance in the same quarter more ominous and blacker than the first? What are these clouds—these dangers which menace the Republic? The one is Abolitionism, the other is Americanism. The first, under the garb of humanity, would destroy the fair fabric of our Union; the other, under the mask of patriotism, would rekindle the fire of persecution, and carry us back to the confines of heathenism.

The Abolitionists contend for the immediate—the utter destruction of slavery in the States.

One portion of them declare slavery to be illegal, unconstitutional, and demand the interposition of the General Government to compel emancipation. They say:

"1. That slaveholding is *illegal* in such a sense, that the fundamental principles of civil law and jurisprudence require all courts of justice to treat it as illegal in all their judicial decisions.

"2. That slavery in the United States and Territories is *unconstitutional*.

"3. That the Federal Government, in its several departments, has constitutional power to prohibit and suppress slaveholding in all the States and Territories; and that the people of the United States ought to exercise the right of suffrage in the election of a Federal Administration to this end."

Another class of them admit that slavery is constitutionally right. The Anti-Slavery Society, through their executive committee, say:

"1. We deem the constitutionality and legality of slavery as generally understood, and the exclusive jurisdiction of the slave States over it within their limits, to be justly regarded by the whole nation as self-evident and axiomatic facts—as much so as the existence of slavery, or of the Constitution itself."

But they insist that it is morally wrong. Hence they conclude that the Constitution of the United States, recognizing a moral evil, is only a "compact with the devil and a league with hell," and as such ought to be subverted. They ask for no power under the Constitution; they vote for no man who will support it. Revolution is their principle; and they are counseled "to vote against all constitutional parties," to "block the wheels of Government, and thus *compel revolution*." And for what? to eradicate an institution which they themselves confess to be legal and constitutional—an institution with which they have nothing to do, no responsibility to bear; they would plunge our land into the horrors of civil war! For a doubtful good they would destroy that building whose foundations were laid in the counsels of the greatest statesmen and most illustrious patriots; a building, which, for the magnificence of its design or the beauty of its proportions, has never yet been equaled; a noble bulwark of national freedom, of security of life and property! It were difficult, indeed, to conceive of greater infatuation! They say:

"We reiterate our former declaration, that the object of this society is not *merely* to make 'liberty national, and slavery sectional'—nor to prevent the acquisition of Cuba—nor to restore the Missouri compromise—nor to repeal the fugitive slave bill—nor to make Kansas a free State—nor to resist the admission of any new slave State into the Union—nor to terminate slavery in the District of Columbia and in the national Territories—but it is, primarily, comprehensively, and uncompromisingly, to effect the immediate, total, and eternal overthrow of slavery, wherever it exists on American soil, and to expose and confront whatever party or sect seeks to purchase peace or success at the expense of human liberty. Living or dying, our motto is, 'NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS, RELIGIOUSLY OR POLITICALLY!'"

"No union with slaveholders, religiously or politically!" Why, sir, why is such ground assumed? If slavery be an evil, does the wrong rest upon them? Should we, to liberate the slave, destroy the country? Would involving our land in bloody strife benefit the condition of the slave? Can the Abolitionists thus benefit the slave? Have not all their efforts had a contrary effect? I do not doubt their imprudent and unjustifiable conduct has not only riveted more firmly the chains of the slave, but has retarded his emancipation for at least half a century. This party cannot fail to see such has been the effect. Then, may I not ask, in the words of a distinguished Senator, "What are the motives of this constant and unrelenting warfare which is waged by some of the people of the North against the rights of the South?" Is it to gratify a foreign and rival Power, which has followed us with the eye of jealousy since the day of our independence, and would make us subservient to her will and dictation? There must be some reason with the *leaders* of this fanatical crusade, which are kept hidden from the body of their deluded followers. Is it possible that Garrison and Parker and May and Phillips and Greeley, and a host of others, are the hirelings of that Power, to carry out the system which it inaugurated here more than forty years ago?

Great Britain has always acted upon the motto, so far as our country is concerned: "*Dissensione nulla salus conspicitur.*" Her aim has uniformly been to foment dissensions among the States of the Union. In 1809, her Governor General of Canada sent John Henry to the malcontents of the Eastern States, to induce them to exert their "influence to bring about a separation of the General Union," and to ascertain "how far, in such an event, they would look to England for assistance." Mr. Henry, in his letter to Sir James H. Craig, Governor General, under date of March 13, 1809, says:

"To bring about a separation of the States, under distinct and independent governments, is an affair of more uncertainty, and, however desirable, cannot be effected but by a series of acts and long-continued policy, tending to irritate the southern and conciliate the northern people." "This, I am aware, is an object of much interest in Great Britain, and would forever secure the integrity of his Majesty's possessions on the Continent, and make the two Governments, or whatever number the present Confederacy might form into, as useful and as much subject to the influence of Great Britain as her colonies can be rendered." "It should, therefore, be the peculiar care of Great Britain to foster dissensions between the North and the South."

That every section of the Union might be made subservient to the interests of England! How well has that Government been represented here! How incessant has been the effort to "foster dissensions between the North and the South." And this "to bring about a separation of the States." And "Massachusetts," according to Mr. Henry, "is to give tone to the neighboring States." How well has she performed her part of this infamous proceeding! Hence her "higher law" doctrines, her abolition and anti-slavery societies, and their incendiary publications; hence her caricatures of the South, its people and institutions; the above denunciation and vilification of the slaveholder, he held up as destitute of all humanity—a demon in human form. To stimulate popular prejudice, high-wrought fiction has been brought into requisition, and sent forth on the wings of the wind, particular cases held up as the general rule, the slavedealer made the type of the slaveholder. Every expedient has been resorted to, which either fanaticism or malice could invent, to excite the most unchristian and hostile feelings between brethren of a common country. Even the sacred desk has been prostituted to foment discord, to excite rancor, and intensify hate. Under this system already have Christian churches been rent asunder, our laws set at defiance, and our glorious Confederacy brought to the verge of disunion; and all

this under pretended sympathy for the slave. So far as the leaders of this movement are concerned, I do not doubt that British gold has a more powerful influence than sympathy, pretended or real.

Sir, we have a noble inheritance, more noble than ever fell to the lot of a nation. Shall it be thus wantonly jeopardized? Even now we are on the point of its total loss. The schemes of British power have been too successful. A little further progress in folly and madness, and we shall be undone. A portion of our people have, by rapid strides, approached the banks of the Rubicon: shall they plunge in and ford the stream? or will they, struck with a sense of error and danger, make a retrograde movement, and regain the point whence they started? Beyond the stream lies a dreary desert, where anarchy and civil war hold their terrific reign, with all their long train of horrors, and where the devious paths lead to ruthless despotism. Once unhinge a Government—once let loose mankind from the restraints of the law and Constitution, and the human mind cannot readily calculate the result. The lessons taught us by the French when under Marat, Danton, Couthon, and Robespierre, should be attended to by those who are lending their aid to tear down the pillars of our Government.

The Republicans are somewhat more conservative. So far as slavery in the States is concerned, they agree with the doctrines of the Democratic party. That new party, in their convention held at Pittsburg on the 22d and 23d of February last, unanimously adopted and published to the country an address. In that address they declare the very doctrine which is the groundwork in the President's argument on the slavery question in his last annual message. He says:

"Hence the General Government, as well by the enumerated powers granted to it, as by those not enumerated, and therefore refused to it, was forbidden to touch this matter (slavery) in the sense of attack or offense: it was placed under the general safeguard of the Union, in the sense of defense against either invasion or domestic violence, like all other local interests of the several States."

The Republican Convention, in the address referred to, speaking of the slavery interest, say:

"We acknowledge that it is large and powerful—that in the States where it exists it is entitled, under the Constitution, like all other local interests, to the immunity from the interference of the General Government, and that it must necessarily exercise, through its representatives, a considerable share of political power."

This commits them fully to the constitutionality of the fugitive slave law; for, if slavery, "like all local interests," is entitled "to immunity from the interference of the General Government," then, "like all other local interests," is it entitled to protection under the Constitution in the States in which it exists.

But, sir, upon the great doctrine of the right of the people to govern themselves, they are not so sound. In the platform, which they adopted at the recent convention in Philadelphia, I find that they "deny the authority of Congress, of a Territorial Legislature, of any individual or association of individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any Territory of the United States, while the present Constitution shall be maintained." Slavery is a mere local institution, depending for its very existence upon municipal law. The people of a Territory have the inherent right to establish such laws and institutions as may seem to them proper. This they may effect by popular conventions, or by delegates elected to represent them. This power, being inherent, no act of Congress can deprive them of it, nor has Congress any constitutional right to prescribe the manner how this power shall be exercised, or the time when it shall be exercised, any more than to limit its exercise. This is the true doctrine of popular sovereignty, and must ultimately prevail. Why, I should like to know—why are not the citizens of a Territory just as competent to legislate for themselves on all subjects as those of a State? I believe they are. The Republican party deny the right of the people in a Territory "to give legal existence" to slavery there. Every southern man in this House, I believe, denies the right of the people in a Territory to prevent the existence of slavery there. The whole South joins hands with the Republicans in denying to the people of a Territory, while in their territorial capacity, any power over the subject of slavery. They both unite in repudiating the great doctrine of popular sovereignty. Both equally condemn it; and yet both grant that the people have the right to legislate on all other subjects. Why, then, not on this? If they possess the right to legislate on any subject, they have equally the power to determine all questions which concern their municipality.

Let the South abandon its bold, dangerous, and untenable ground, that the Constitution carries slavery into the Territories; and let the North repudiate the equally unconstitutional doctrine, that Congress may prohibit slavery there, and leave this, as you leave other questions, to the people of the Territories, to whom it properly belongs, to determine in their own way, at their own time, and in such a manner as their circumstances may demand. Then will sectional discord cease. Then will be restored those peaceful fraternal relations which ought never to have been interrupted, or even only disturbed, among Americans, the descendants of those glorious heroes who shed their blood—who died for the American Union! Then will the substantial interest of the country, arts and science, universities and popular schools, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and great improvements, receive due consideration. Then, too, will the Chief Executive, instead of bringing the whole influence and power of the Government, as the present Chief Magistrate has done, to crush the popular will in the Territories, and force upon the people obnoxious institutions, protect them in their rights, and deal out even-handed justice.

But, sir, I will guard my words. I would not degrade the Administration of my country; but this Administration has done more than all previous Administrations combined have done, to demoralize the people, to create sectional hostilities, and to centralize power. Yet, by some, the test of Democracy in this House is to declare the President infallible—that he has committed no blunders—that he can commit none, so far as the slavery question is concerned. If this is to be viewed in the light of the maxim, that the King can do no wrong, (nor the Queen either,) and if it be a mere political fiction, then I have no objection to say so. It may do to say so as a fiction, with the distinct understanding that it is only

such. Because I cannot indorse all the acts of this Administration as just, noble, and exalted—because I will not follow the unwise example of self-constituted leaders, and thus betray the confidence of my constituents, some gentlemen of this House, with more assurance than prudence, have undertaken a task without an adequate conception of its difficulties. They have undertaken to excommunicate me from the Democratic party! I refer to the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. LETCHER,] and the gentleman from Alabama, [Mr. HOUSTON.] If belief in the infallibility of the President be the test of Democracy, then they are Democrats. But, as for myself, if I had ever entertained so absurd an idea, it would have been completely dispelled the moment when the Administration interfered with the custom-house appointments in New York, and removed Judge Bronson. Since then, every succeeding day has only riveted more firmly in my mind the conviction, that the President is "like clay in the hands of the potter," molded into form by those who would use him. Therefore, I repudiate any such test, and would suggest what appears to me the only proper one, that is, adherence to the principles of the party, and faithfulness to its organization. By this rule I judge, and by it I am willing to be judged. I shall now inquire into the *status* of each of these gentlemen, to ascertain by what claim either assumes the censorship. These gentlemen were both present at the Democratic caucus held this session, and participated in its proceedings, and voted for the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the Democratic members of the House of Representatives, though in a temporary minority in this body, deem this a fit occasion to tender to their fellow-citizens of the whole Union their heartfelt congratulations on the triumph, in the recent elections in several of the northern, eastern, and western, as well as southern States, of the principles of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and the doctrines of civil and religious liberty, which have been so violently assailed by a secret political Order known as the Know Nothing party; and, though in a minority, we hold it to be our highest duty to preserve our organization, and continue our efforts in the maintenance and defense of those principles, and the constitutional rights of every section and every class of citizens against their opponents of every description, whether the so-called Republicans, Know Nothings, or Fusionists; and to this end we look with confidence to the support and approbation of all good and true men—friends of the Constitution and the Union throughout the country."

On the 31st of January, the following resolution was offered by the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. TRIPPE,] an American:

"*Resolved*, That the Hon. WILLIAM SMITH, of Virginia, be, and he is hereby, declared Speaker of the House of Representatives for the Thirty-Fourth Congress."

On the 1st of February, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. JONES] submitted to the House the following:

"*Resolved*, That MORDECAI OLIVER, a Representative from Missouri, be, and hereby is, chosen Speaker of the House of Representatives."

The same day the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. COBB] offered the "*olive branch*," which was:

"*Resolved*, That the Hon. WILLIAM AIKEN, a Representative from South Carolina, be, and he is hereby, chosen Speaker of the House of Representatives."

On each of the above the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. LETCHER] and the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HOUSTON] voted. Both their names are recorded for the former of these resolutions, and against a motion to lay the two latter on the table. And this was done while the Democratic candidate was yet in the field. Three times did these gentlemen deliberately desert the Democratic nominee, and voted for two persons who were not members of the Democratic party, and for one who, though a Democrat, opposed the election of Governor Wise. I hold, sir, that no man, who went into caucus, and assisted to make a nomination, could consistently vote for any other person but the nominee. No matter whether the person so voted for be a Democrat or not, if introduced without the authority of the party, any one voting for him, when a regularly-nominated candidate is before the House, violates the usages of the party. Thus both these gentlemen stand convicted. Not only so, but they voted for the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. AIKEN] for Speaker, after there was evidence to satisfy any reasonable man that he had given pledges which were satisfactory to the American party. To verify this, I will read from the Congressional Globe, pages 337 and 338:

"Pending the call of the roll,

"Mr. BARCLAY (when his name was called) said: I wish the indulgence of the House a moment before I cast my vote.

"The CLERK. If there is no objection, the gentleman will proceed.

"There was no objection.

"Mr. BARCLAY. I wish to say to the House, that during this protracted session my votes are on the record. They stand there, whether they may condemn me or otherwise. I have had no reason to change my views upon the policy which agitates the country. I have been averse, as is well known to this House, to anything which looked like a collusion with Know Nothingism—I care not whether it come from the North or South; I say I have been averse to anything like that. I have, for the three ballots this morning, thrown my vote away; and, as I yesterday voted against the honorable gentleman from South Carolina, [Mr. AIKEN,] the Democratic candidate being in the field, and as he has now formally withdrawn, I now desire to know one or two things before I cast my vote upon this, the most important ballot of the session. I should like to know whether the gentleman from South Carolina stands upon the resolution passed by the Democratic caucus on the first day of December last, in this Hall? I want to know whether he indorses that resolution? [Cries of 'I object to discussion;' 'Too late.'] I want an answer to that question before I cast my vote.

"Mr. RUST. I call the gentleman to order. The question comes from a wrong quarter.

"Mr. BARCLAY. I am in order. I am upon the floor; and before I cast my vote I desire to know upon what platform the gentleman from South Carolina stands, and I ask him to answer my question. I also ask him whether he has not addressed a letter to the Hon. HUMPHREY MARSHALL, of Kentucky? and whether he has made any pledges satisfactory to the southern wing of the National American party?

"Mr. BOYCE. I object to any questions being asked.

"Mr. BARCLAY. I ask the gentleman what his position is? I ask him if he has not written such a letter?

"Mr. AIKEN. I am not a candidate for the speakership. If my friends think proper to place me in that position, I shall serve them to the best of my ability.

"Mr. BARCLAY. I shall then withhold my vote for the present."

In addition to this, I will read a portion of the remarks made by the gentleman from Kentucky, [Mr. A. K. MARSHALL,] when called to vote upon the final ballot:

"But, gentlemen, my friends, we have not yet finished our course. We have yet a duty to perform. The battle in which we have till now been engaged has been a party fight. We have been contending for party existence—for party supremacy. We have demanded from our Democratic friends a recognition of our existence, our respectability, our patriotism; and an acknowledgment upon their part that they did us injustice in the opinion they expressed by the resolution passed in their first caucus, and the declara-

tion made in regard to us in that resolution. We have fought a good fight for our party; and we have done more—we have conquered for them. The Democracy have no candidate for the office of Speaker before us now. Is there a nominee of that party here? Is there a Democratic platform now presented which bears on its face an offense and indignity to the American party? No, sir; neither is before this body now. They have lost sight of both, and why should we remember them longer."

In this connection I will also read the pledges given by the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. AIKEN] to the gentleman from Kentucky, [Mr. A. K. MARSHALL,] as published in the American Democrat, under date of Baltimore, February 15, 1856, together with a portion of editorial remarks on the subject:

"On the morning that the vote under the plurality rule was to be taken, when Mr. AIKEN began to be spoken of, the Hon. ALEXANDER KEITH MARSHALL, of Kentucky, a staunch American and conservative, being reluctant to vote for Mr. AIKEN without understanding his ground fully, wrote down, and carried to him in his seat, a series of interrogatories which, with their answers, we here subjoin:

"1st. Are you hostile to the American party; and have you ever pronounced, or do you now believe, that party enemies to civil and religious liberty?

"Answer to 1st. To the first I answer I never have.

"2d. Are you in favor of the union of the States so long as it can be continued without such violation of the spirit of the Constitution as would justify revolution?

"Answer 2d. I am in favor of the continuance of this Union as long as the rights of all the States are preserved.

"3d. Do you belong to the Democratic organization, and do you fully indorse the course and policy of the present Administration, so far as to favor the election of the present incumbent to office again?

"Answer 3d. I do not, strictly speaking, belong to the Democratic party organization. I approve what I believe right, and will oppose what I think wrong, in that as in all other parties.

"4th. Would you object to such a modification of the naturalization laws as would require citizens of other countries to remain here before they become citizens of this country for a decidedly longer term than at present?

"Answer 4th. I would *not* object, but would favor a *material* extension of the naturalization laws.

"These answers were known to every member of the American party in the House. Mr. AIKEN said he would sign the paper as soon as the election was over, but not then. His reason for not signing them *then* is sufficiently obvious. He did not wish to appear to do it, merely through anxiety to obtain the office."

The gentleman from South Carolina, [Mr. AIKEN,] it will be observed, refused to answer what I desired to know, and what I had a *right* to call for, and refused it, too, after having voted for the following resolution offered by the gentleman from Tennessee, [Mr. ZOLLICOFFER;] which passed by a vote of 155 to 38:

"*Resolved*, That in conformity with the principles of a great popular Government, such as that of the United States, it is the duty of all candidates for political position frankly and fully to state their opinions upon important political questions involved in their election, and especially when they are interrogated by the body of electors, whose votes they are seeking."

His declining to answer satisfied me of his position. I consequently determined to withhold my vote.

Now, I submit that the remarks of the gentleman from Kentucky, every word of which was justified by these pledges, could not well have been misunderstood, especially after the gentleman from South Carolina declined to answer my questions. Thus was the resolution passed by the Democratic caucus, trampled by them in the dust, and the position there taken shamefully deserted. And now *they* come and denounce *me!* They assail my Democratic standing! Let them remember, that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones!

Sir, I am denounced because I voted to send a committee of investigation to Kansas; because I voted to admit Kansas as a free State, under a constitution formed by a majority of her citizens; and because I voted to exclude General Whitfield as Delegate, and to admit Governor Reeder. These are political sins in the estimation of the gentleman from Virginia and the gentleman from Alabama. I would have no difficulty in defending my votes before the country. I need no justification. I will, however, remark that there is a distinction between principles and measures. A man may be a good Democrat, and yet oppose a measure of the Democratic party when he believes that measure to be wrong; but he cannot be a good Democrat without sustaining the principles of the Democratic party.

Now, I ask what principle of the Democratic party did I violate by any of my votes? None at all. I acted strictly in accordance with the principles of Democracy in sustaining the appointment of a committee to investigate the causes of the difficulties in Kansas, and to inquire into the alleged election frauds there. Do you call it Democratic to encourage the invasion of a Territory?—to control the ballot-box by armed and brutal violence?—to strangle the press?—to hunt men down like wild beasts for mere expression of opinion?—to stifle the voice of a free people, and to force upon them laws which they had no part in framing? Do you call it Democratic to elevate fraud, and to trample upon bleeding virtue? Is that your Democracy? It is not mine. Such Democracy may do for the miasmatic atmosphere of the districts represented by these gentlemen, but it will never do for the pure, healthful, Democratic mountain air of my cherished State. We have been taught that Democracy consists in an equality of rights, resistance to wrongs, protection against oppressions, and justice to all.

I regret, sir, that I have been forced into a mere personal controversy; having been assailed, I could not help defending myself. That being done, I now take leave of this subject, apologizing to the House for even necessary personal reference, and proceed to another train of remarks.

I have said our greatest danger, perhaps, is from the spread of the principles of the American party. I say so, because they appeal to the baser passions of our nature. Having no one feature intrinsically excellent, yet, by *ad captandum* phrases, they are well calculated to lead astray many who would scorn them if presented stripped of the veil with which their hideousness is concealed.

The doctrines of this party are not of recent origin or native growth. Long ago were they rebuked by the voice of Omnipotence: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." But notwithstanding they have ever gone hand in hand with prejudice and illiberal feeling. During the long night of the middle ages—when the human mind was bound with the shackles of superstition and her twin sister, vice—when the tendency of everything was to separate and isolate individuals, communities, and nations, with particular plans, customs, objects, and pursuits—when

"Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhorred each other—mountains interposed
Made enemies of nations, who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one,"

some palliation might have been found for such contracted views. But now there can be neither justification, nor excuse, nor palliation.

Our Revolution more immediately developed those great ideas which dimly burned in the bosom of Christendom, and occasionally labored to realize themselves in the various enterprises of the day. Those ideas, which are attached to the divinest sentiments of the soul, are expressive of its aspirations, and of its responses to the great needs of humanity. Those ideas, so developed, sped calmly and silently on their way, extending their influence to every class and condition of society, dissipated the prejudices of men, and shed a divine luster on the darkness of the world. Under their influence, the spirit of persecution gave place to the spirit of love. The angry floods of religious strife and discord abated, and left another and more peaceful spirit at work in the hearts of men. They revealed fully to the gaze of the world the doctrine of human brotherhood, and pointed man to an excellence which glimmered in the immeasurable heights above him.

But, sir, in the year of our Lord 1854 this is all reversed. Prejudice and bigotry bring forth a party which in the land of Washington would revive old abuses, reinstate false theories, ancient dogmas, and miserable fallacies; a party that would destroy just and reasonable laws, established upon correct principles; a party that would obscure the brightest gem in the coronet of American liberty, break up the fountains of the great deep, and let loose the turbulent waters of passion; and this under the pretense of "passionate attachment to our country, its history, and institutions"—under pretense of "imitation of the practice of the purer days of the Republic"—under pretense of "veneration for the heroism that precipitated our Revolution, and of emulation of the virtue, wisdom, and patriotism that framed our Constitution, and first successfully applied its provisions"—under the hypocritical pretense of reverence for "Christianity," and the "Holy Bible." Never, sir, was the "*gutta non vi sed sæpe cadendo*" more completely verified. This party calls itself "American." Do its principles correspond with its professions? On the contrary, are they not "blackened to the very blackest," and "gangrened to the very core?"

Our fathers concluded the Constitution with that memorable clause: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States;" a clause worthy of them and the country they represented. They declared: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The essence of a crime consists not in the violation of the *letter* of the law, but of its *spirit*. I know this party disavow any attempt to strike these clauses out of the Constitution; but that is probably because they have not the power to do it. I know they disavow any intention to make a religious test a qualification for office; for, if that were asserted, thousands of honest liberal men who have joined them would stand horror-stricken at the loathsomeness of that party, and turn their backs upon it with ineffable disgust. Yet, sir, this American party does glaringly violate the spirit of, and strike a deathblow at, these constitutional provisions. One leading purpose is, as we learn from the Philadelphia platform, to exclude from "advancement" "to all political stations" every person except "those only who do not hold civil allegiance, directly or indirectly, to any foreign Power." Do not Catholics deny holding such allegiance—universally deny it? But the American party say they do "hold civil allegiance to a foreign Power." They assume as fact what is most distinctly denied; and upon that assumption predicate their political action to exclude all Catholics from any participation in the Government, native as well as foreign-born, because they are Catholics. This is the reason, and the only one. They are rejected as unworthy on account of their religious faith. They deny holding civil allegiance to any foreign Power; and this party which would exclude them do not pretend to prove they do hold it, and no intelligent one among them believes it. What is this but a species of persecution? What but contrary to the spirit of the Constitution? And yet they tell us they favor the largest religious liberty. It may be they do, but, if so, most assuredly it is confined to those of their own party and belief. If they do, why this religious political warfare? Why politically oppose, malign, and villify a particular sect? Why raise the cry that religion and liberty are in danger—that a deep plot is laid to destroy the one and subvert the other? Why these deliberate, continued, and, may I not say, malicious attempts to excite prejudices throughout our land?

Sir, it has been the uniform policy of our country to encourage immigration. Heretofore we have thrown wide open our doors to the men of every country and every clime. We have invited them to come and make this their home. No country owes more to foreigners than our own, and none has more need of them now. Yet this party, which would "imitate the practice of the purer days of the Republic"—I suppose they mean by that the days of the alien and sedition laws—this party visit upon a well-ordered, intelligent, honest, industrious people, bitter invectives, unfounded reproaches, and malignant aspersions. Indiscriminate abuse is heaped upon all of foreign birth, particularly on the Germans and Irish, on whose devoted heads are incessantly "poured out the vials of wrath." Forgetful of the services the foreigner has rendered the country "in the fiery hour of trial," Americanism would exclude him from the enjoyment of free institutions, or make his home here too intolerable to be borne.

There is scarcely any country in Christendom that does not gladly avail itself of the proffered talents of the foreigner who makes his permanent domicil there. England placed West, an American, at the head of the Royal Academy. France intrusted her armies to a Berwick, to a Saxe, and her financial concerns were presided over by a Swiss banker. Scotch heroes have commanded Russian fleets; and I believe the defenses at Sebastopol were conducted by an American engineer. While all other nations, profiting by our example, are growing more liberal, it is gravely pro-

posed to introduce here the narrow, illiberal systems of China and Japan.

In the "purer days of the Republic," our country fought for foreigners; the war of 1812 was in defense of their rights. Then the Government held the rights of foreign-born citizens to be as sacred as those of the native-born; their interest, our interest; their cause, our cause. Yet there was a party then which cursed President Madison ten thousand times over for his "folly and wickedness" in involving this country in war for the purpose of securing a few seamen, who were said to be vagabond English, Irish, and Scotch, the scum of the earth, from the claims of their lawful prince. And the Massachusetts Legislature declared, "The real cause of the war must be traced to the influence of worthless foreigners"—that is, naturalized citizens, asking protection against their oppressors. The cry of foreign influence was then raised by the Federal party. The same cry is now raised by the American party.

I will go, sir, as far as any man in resisting foreign interference in the affairs of our country—that interference which would foment dissensions, excite animosities, and divide citizens of a common country—which would fan the flame of sectional discord, and which has long sought to break into fragments the Union of the States; this is the foreign influence "the Father of his Country" warned us—*beware!*

In every age and nation there have been turbulent, ambitious, and unscrupulous men, who, having a design themselves upon the people, artfully address their passions and prejudices until their reason becomes clouded, when they are led to play

> ——"such fantastic tricks before high Heaven,
> As make the angels weep."

Who does not know what was the magical effect in Great Britain of the cry: "The Church is in danger!" by which the severities and restrictions under which the Dissenters groaned for one hundred and fifty years were firmly riveted on them? Who is ignorant of the effects of the cry of "French influence" in our own land—of the unpatriotic and tumultuous proceedings it gave rise to—of the bitter denunciation of Jefferson, and which caused even honorable members of this House to threaten Mr. Madison with exile to Elba, or the alternative of a halter around his neck? Who has not heard, at a later day, the senseless clamor raised by the American party—"Foreign influence!"—"Catholics!"—"ignorant foreigners!"—"Americans rule America!" &c.? and who has not looked with disgust upon the consequences—the disgraceful riots in Louisville, Covington, Cincinnati, St. Louis, New Orleans, and other cities of the Union, where Christians were slaughtered by Christians—where the blood of man was thrown by his brother in the face of Heaven? The angel of justice has gone forth, and the leaders and instigators of such enormities will meet with merited retribution.

Sir, this American party desire an "essential modification of the naturalization laws." The object is to prevent, for a long period of time, the foreign-born citizen from exercising the right of suffrage. This is to be done indirectly. They well know naturalization confers no right to vote. But the State laws give this right to all *citizens* of the United States possessing the requisite qualifications. By extending these laws—by preventing the citizenship of foreigners, the State laws could not take effect, and of course the foreign-born would be deprived of any representation. They also resolve to bring about a repeal of the laws in those States allowing foreigners not naturalized the right to vote. What reasons do they give us for these proposed changes? They tell us that a residence of five years is too short to enable the foreigner to understand the genius of our Government—to become sufficiently indoctrinated with the republican principles of our Constitution; that his old prejudices yet hang about him; that he cannot divest himself so soon of the vivid memories of his childhood, home, and fatherland; that as native-born citizens must remain here twenty-one years before voting, so should the alien; that the present laws are abused in foreigners coming here fraudulently procuring naturalization upon one year's residence; and to cap the climax it is said, they are ignorant, and universally vote the Democratic ticket.

A brief answer only is required to these various positions. If the foreigner does not "understand the genius of our Government," or "the republican principles of our Constitution," how comes it he uniformly "votes the Democratic ticket?" If it be true they are all Democrats, as they are charged, that is the most conclusive argument which could be furnished that they do "understand the genius of our Government," and are deeply indoctrinated with "republican principles." Would his prejudices be likely to grow less by taxation without representation? Would the sense of degradation, to which you would thus subject him, weaken the memory of his childhood's home, or dim the recollections of his fatherland? If the naturalization laws are evaded, how will their extension remedy that? Would not there then be a much stronger inducement to use unworthy means to evade them than now? Would an extension afford any additional security? Surely not. "Our children have to remain here till the age of twenty-one before they are allowed to vote." So do foreign-born children. But for the sake of common sense it were to be hoped this "*great*" American party will not longer draw an argument from a comparison between the weakness of infancy and the maturity of manhood.

Is it true that our foreign-born population are ignorant and degraded? It is not, sir. The great body of them are neither the one nor the other. From foreign lands are some of our ablest ministers, most profound scholars, noblest statesmen, and distinguished generals. Among the agricultural population will be found, in these foreigners, as much industry, intelligence, honesty, and, indeed, every virtue which adorns man, as in a corresponding number of native-born. As inventors, manufacturers, and artisans, they have rendered our country important services. As citizens they are, with few exceptions, peaceable, law-abiding, and patriotic. And if those gentlemen, who talk so much about ignorant foreigners, would only extend their vision beyond the city limits of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, and look out among the rural districts—if they have not abundant reason at home—there they will find more than sufficient reason to induce a change of opinion. In their native land they have been

crushed by wasteful, destroying, despotic Governments—curbed, constrained, and controlled in their industry by monopolies and restrictions and grinding taxes. Their oppressions and deprivations have taught them the value of liberty, and with eager eyes they look to "the asylum of the oppressed," and greet this land as the mother of freedom.

Under the wise and liberal policy of our ancestors, look at the stupendous increase of our country! With what ineffable delight must not the lover of his species contemplate her glorious scenes of expanding population, civilization, and happiness: agriculture, arts, manufactures, commerce, and science, spreading their holy empire, where before only the savage reigned! Many, many of those who have largely contributed to this magnificent result are foreigners. With the American party this is a reproach. It attaches disgrace to them on account of the place of their birth. It would deprive them of their rights as citizens under the miserable pretext that they are incapable of enjoying them—that they are dangerous! Language is too meager to express the deep degradation of such principles. Aptly may this party apply to itself the words of Lucifer:

> "I am the imperfection of the whole,
> The pitch profoundest of the fallible,
> Myself the all of evil that exists,
> The ocean heaped into a single surge."

I shall not now refer, sir, in contradiction of the bald assertions of the "Americans," to the illustrious names of Steuben, De Kalb, Kosciusko, Pulaski, Morris, La Fayette, and other names, which shed luster upon almost every page of early American history, and whose memories will be held in grateful remembrance till "the last syllable of recorded time."

But I will call attention to humbler, yet no less noble men. Look over to the Brandywine! On its banks may be seen a band of Irishmen. They are enrolled against the country of their birth, in the ranks of the country of their adoption. They form the greater part of the celebrated Pennsylvania line. Their sunburnt visages, all scarred, attest how well they have acquitted themselves in the field. Their blood has been freely given for our country. Many of their comrades have sealed their attachment with their lives. They are the residue. They march along with determined, but sorrowful countenances. Their tattered garments serve not to protect their bodies; their shocless feet mark with blood their tracks on the snow. Half famished they can scarcely drag their weary limbs along. Their noble leader, as he views that noble but distressed band, with heaving heart wipes the half fallen tear from his manly cheek. Look again. They are now at Morristown. Long have they entreated for assistance, but none comes; they have begged, implored, for the merest necessities of life: all, all in vain. The ear of those for whom they fight is turned away. Their appeals to their gratitude, generosity, justice, are unavailing. But cold neglect is theirs. Is it for this they have suffered? Is it for this so many of their companions have been left upon the battle-field? All hope of relief is gone. The most intense sufferings are theirs. They become, and justly so, indignant at the wrongs they have borne. They now demand the redress for which they have so long supplicated. They mutiny. The morning of the 1st of January, 1781, that line of thirteen hundred men march out of their encampment. The gallant Wayne, their commanding officer, hastens to the front, presents his pistol as if about to fire. There stand those brave and determined men. They hold their bayonets to his breast. "We love and respect you, but if you fire, you are a dead man. We are not going over to the enemy. We are determined in obtaining justice." They march to Princeton, whence the intelligence is quickly taken to the British camp. Hark! what shouts fall upon our ears? It is the rejoicing, by that host, that the time was come to end the "rebellion"—to crush out the half-formed embryo of the Republic. Confidential messengers are dispatched by Sir Henry Clinton to the suffering Hibernians. British protection is offered, pardon for all past offenses, without expecting military service from them. They are told of the plentiful table of their royal master, abundant supplies of provisions, clothing in profusion, pay, and bounties. Upon these poor, neglected warriors the tempter has no power. They choose to endure poverty, nakedness, suffering, and ingratitude. They seize the messengers, trample upon their shining ore, and send them back to the tent of General Wayne, to pay the forfeit of their lives. *There was no Arnold among them!* The council of Pennsylvania sent their president, Reed, and General Potter, to confer with the mutineers. They met them at Princeton. President Reed offered them a purse of one hundred guineas as a reward for their fidelity. They refused it with these noble words, "We have only done our duty." Are not these facts a sufficient answer to the charges of ignorance, degradation, and danger to our country, of our foreign population, asserted and reiterated by American orators throughout the land?

Sir, it has been asked me, how, with such views, I can sustain the Democratic party and support Mr. Buchanan? I will tell you, sir. No principle of that party contravenes a single doctrine I have advanced, or vote I have given. Not one. As man in his individual capacity is imperfect, so is he in an associated one. And though I believe my party to have occasionally erred on measures—on mere questions of expediency, yet, in my opinion, that is not sufficient reason to overturn principles which must endure as long as justice and the love of liberty shall find a place in the human heart.

I shall, as I have ever done, support Mr. Buchanan, because I believe him to be a Democrat "in whom there is no guile." I support him, because in his own person he represents the principles of the party—because he is perhaps the greatest of our living statesmen—prudent, judicious, and safe—because he stands opposed to that new light, from which every man ought to fly as he would from a perilous promontory, or from the threatening Charybdis, or from the mythic Syrens—that light which directs man from the truth, which leads him from liberty, which hedges his way with snares, pitfalls, and abysses: Mr. Buchanan is the only man, as I believe, who is now able to extricate the country from the imminent dangers which surround it, and dispel the threatening clouds which overhang the Republic.

Printed at the Office of the Congressional Globe.

W46

WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville Pa
Jan - Feb 1989